

Baptism

God Commands Baptism:

“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. **19** Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, **20**teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:18-20).

God’s Promises in Baptism:

“Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? **4**We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. **5**For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his” (Romans 6:3-5).

“But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, **5**he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, **6**whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, **7**so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life” (Titus 3:4-7).

“But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God” (I Corinthians 6:11).

“Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, **22**who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to him” (I Peter 3:21-22).

How can water do such great things?

Certainly not just water, but the word of God in and with the water does these things, along with the faith which trusts this word of God in the water. For without God's word the water is plain water and no Baptism. But with the word of God it is a Baptism, that is, a life-giving water, rich in grace, and a washing of the new birth in the Holy Spirit, as St. Paul says in Titus, chapter three: "He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by His grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life. This is a trustworthy saying" (Small Catechism).